

Kid Gloves as the progenitor of Angry Video Game Nerds

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Wouldn't *that* make a compelling thesis title? Far more than my actual one at least, guaranteed.



Back when I shared the family home with my brother, I'd become accustomed to hearing some pretty strange utterances emerge from his loft-conversion cesspit of a bedroom. Topping the charts would be the vented wails, "it never touched me!", "I was nowhere near it!" or "I killed you!", intermittently punctuated with disgruntled tuts and incredulous sighs and groans. Go on, have a guess how I knew whenever he was playing Amiga games, and not making much progress with them at that.



When verbally assaulting the TV screen failed to elicit the desired alteration in providence, thuds and thumps would often reverberate through the floorboards. I assume this was my delightful sibling taking his frustration out on whatever inanimate object was closest to fist or boot. I was both fascinated and disturbed by this ritual and often wondered how tortuous a game would have to be to provoke such an extreme response. One day I concocted some excuse or other to go upstairs to look over his shoulder and finally solve the mystery.



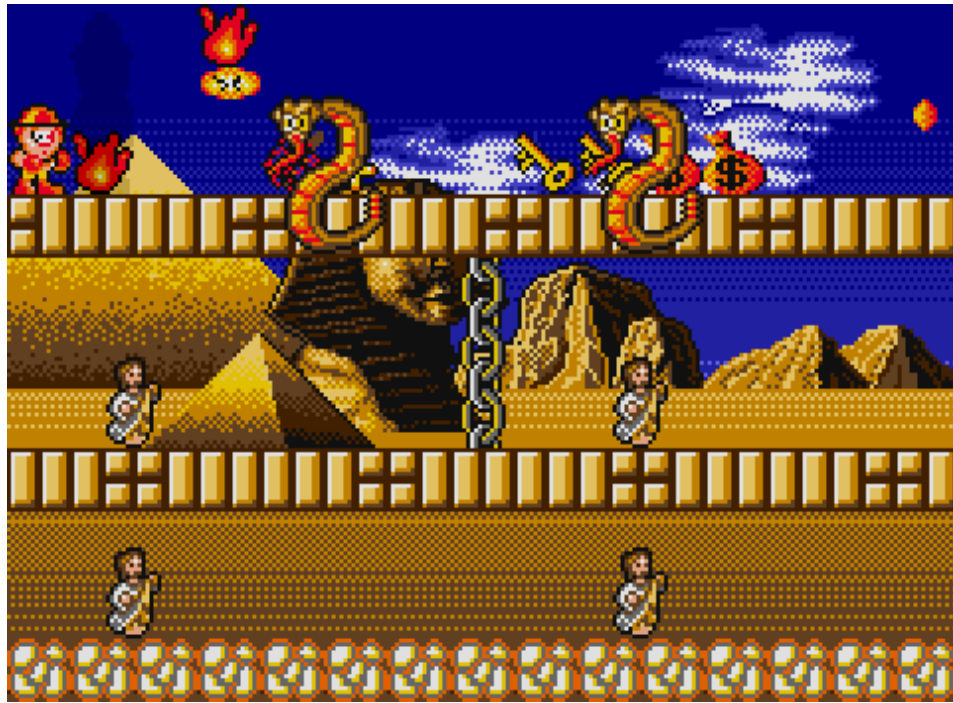
More often than not he'd be bashing away on the seemingly innocuous, ultra-cute, screen-flipping platformer, Kid Gloves from Millennium Interactive. It features 'Kid', who wears *gloves*, perhaps not entirely surprisingly. Only these are *magic, time-travelling* gloves that have unexpectedly transported our protagonist into yonder past from which he has to escape by battling through five diversely themed levels, slaying all manner of wacky foes in the process.



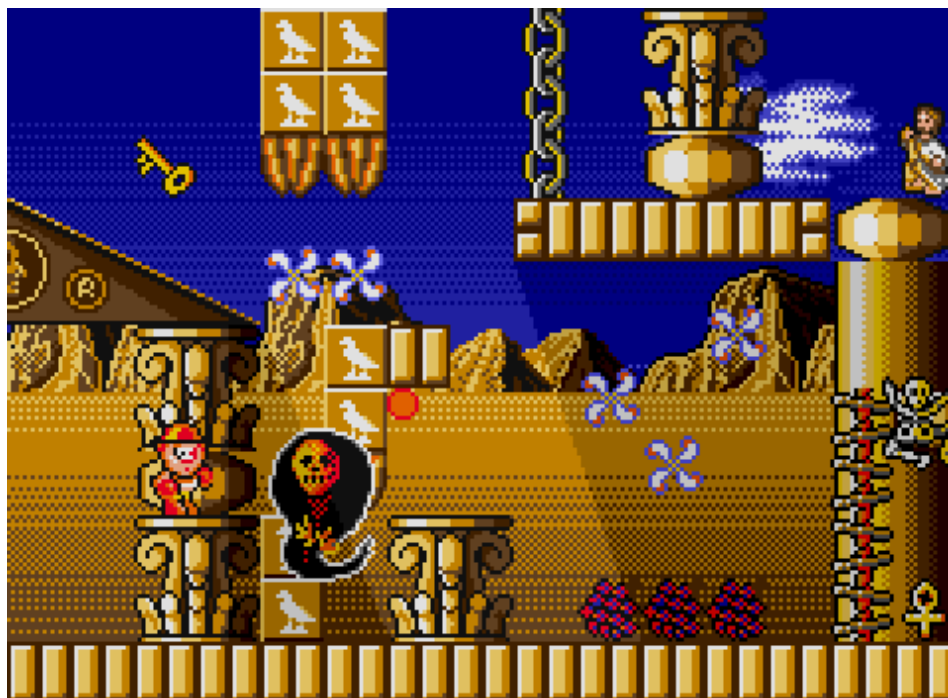
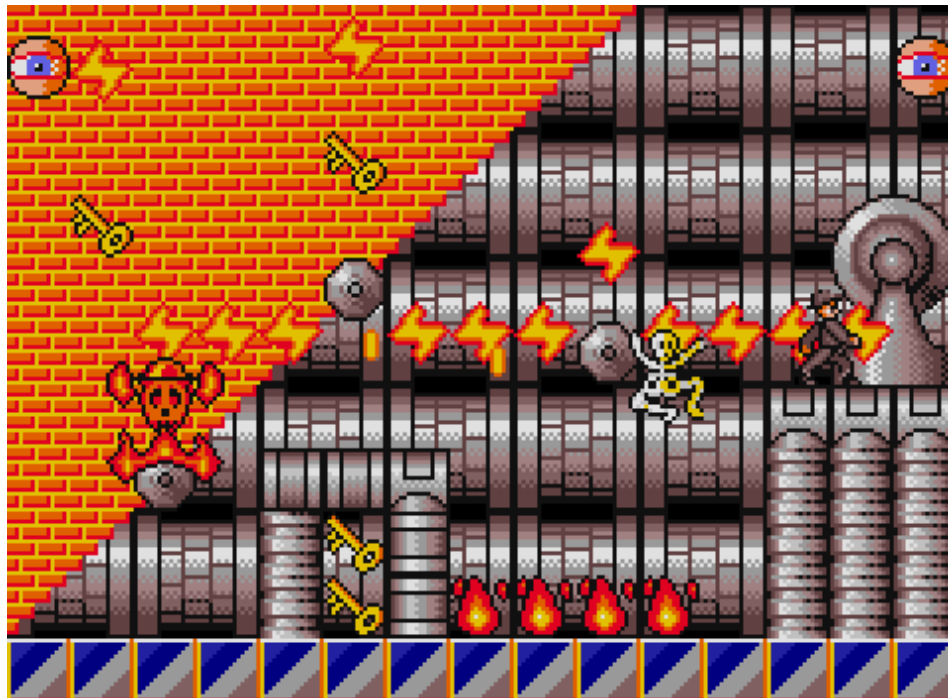
I'd thought little about these spontaneous outbursts of rage until quite recently - approximately 23 years later - when I was tinkering with the Amiga emulator, FS-UAE, wondering what nostalgic button-masher to fire up next. I reasoned that if someone could hate a game to that degree, yet still keep going back for more, it must have *something* going for it. With that I booted up Kid Gloves and my descent into madness began.



It turns out that all the teeth-gnashing, vehement physical violence and vitriolic abuse levelled at it were entirely warranted! It's the most excruciatingly, infuriatingly, demoralisingly, vexatiously irksome pile of pixels ever to grace the gaming catalogue of any computing or console platform, ever. No, it's *worse* than that!

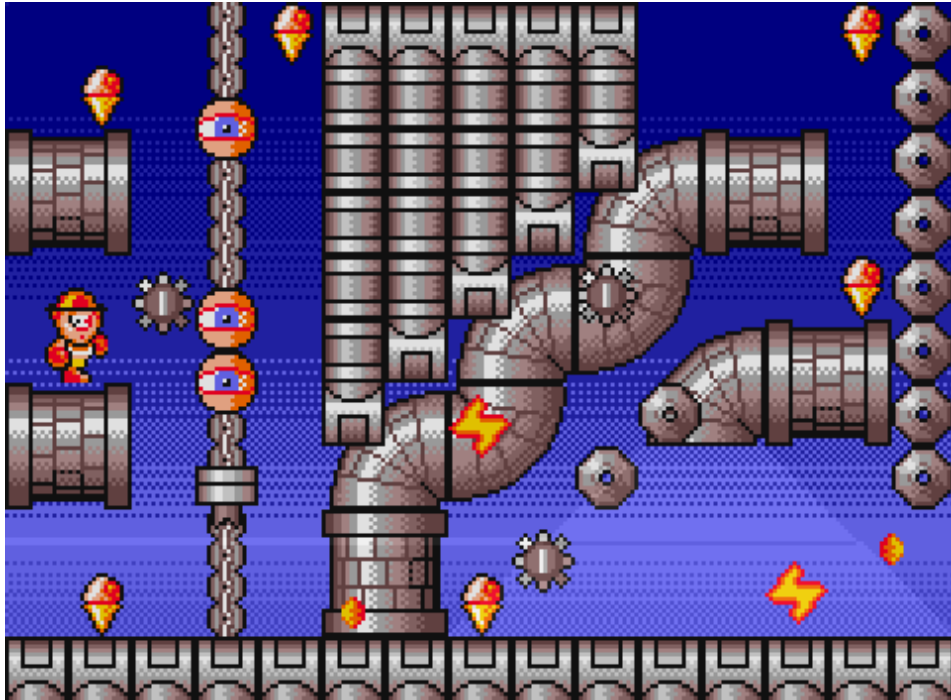


A spot of musical foreshadowing in a game often comes in handy since it alerts the player of the necessity to guard against imminent danger lurking just around the next corner. But what happens when danger skulks around *every* corner and you could die at *any* moment and for *no* logically discernible or copacetic reason?

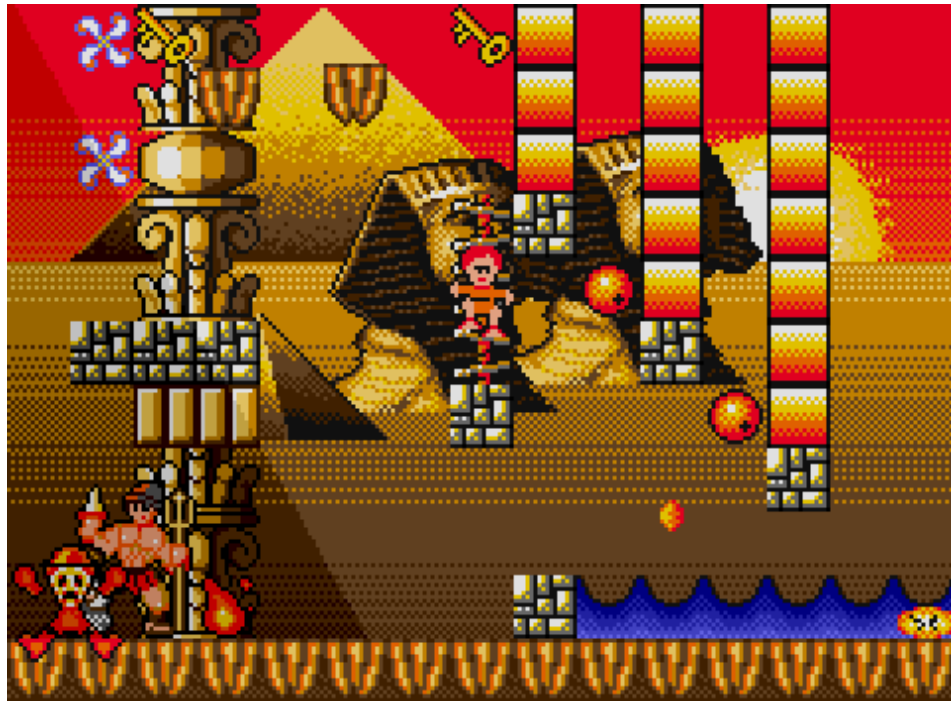


Millennium have that base covered; repeat the same two-second sense-of-foreboding-laden ditty over and over and over again. It's played when an enemy spawns, it's triggered

when the hurry-up-eyeballs-of-damnation (or alternative ghoulish ephemera) put in an unwelcome appearance all too quickly after entering a scene, it reverberates when you return to the screen after losing a life, and also when nothing at all instigates it, but it's been more than three milliseconds since it was last trotted out to mercilessly assault your auditory lug-holes.



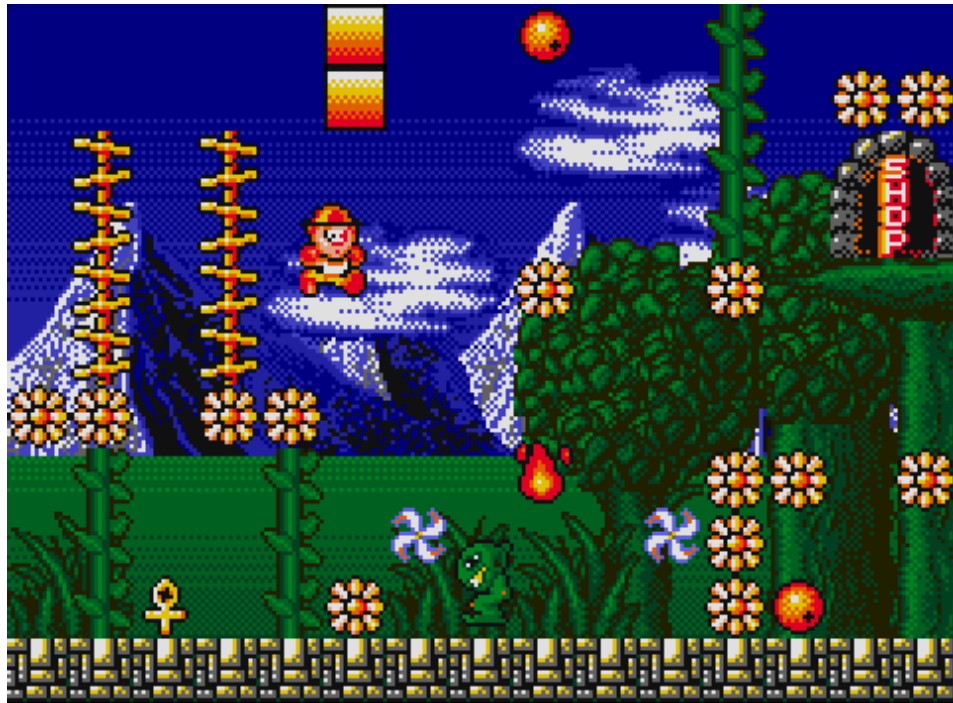
I have to concede that the first time I met my maker I couldn't help grinning at the imaginatively quirky death animation. "Oh noooo", Kid shrieks as he spontaneously combusts, his hat - all that remains of our hero - plummeting to the ground accompanied by Wile E. Coyote-esque "weeeeeeee... splat" sound effects. On the *seven-hundredth* occasion you see it, it's not quite so endearing.



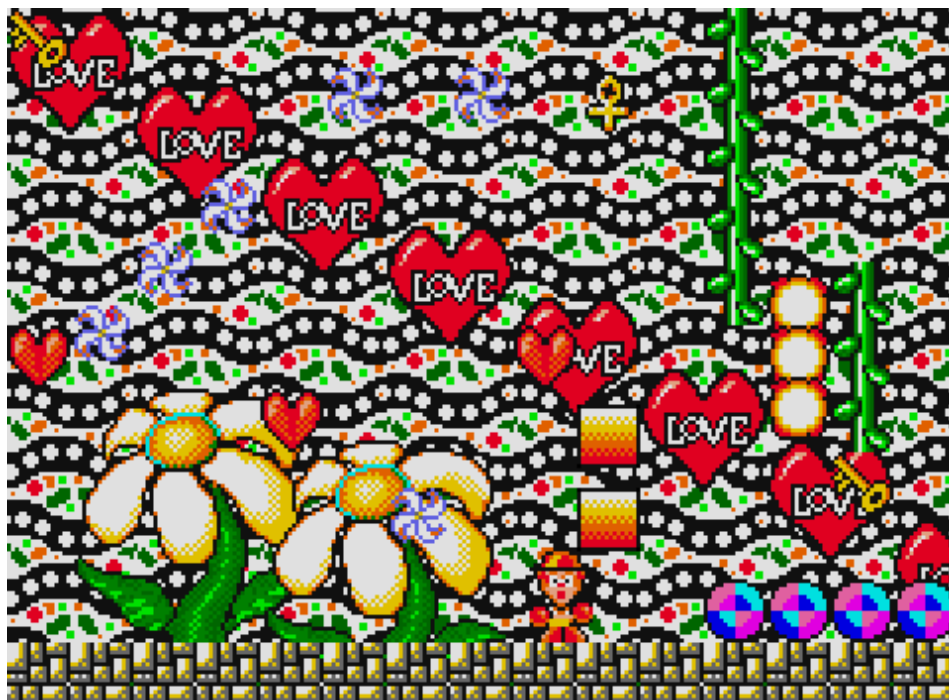
Trust me, if you're going to embrace the sadomasochistic lunacy and give Kid Gloves a go, you will become acutely familiar with this routine. Our main predicament is that the collision detection is abysmal. My brother was right; he/she/whatever really *didn't* touch him, yet somehow Kid is incinerated regardless. One minute you can jump *through* an enemy and not perish, the next you could bite the dust just by casually *glancing* at a bouncing troll. OK, *sometimes* it's a fair cop, but is it imperative for the enemies to re-spawn right *on top* of you? One could argue you were warned; did you not hear the trademark ditty-of-doom?



One pixel out either side of the centre point of a ladder and you've got as much chance of ascending it as you have of refraining from flinging Kid Gloves' floppies out of the nearest window. Given that ladders will often be your only means of escape from an impending threat, feeling as though your feet have been welded to the ground is far from ideal... and you get no bonus points for performing the Smooth Criminal lean.



Kid Gloves' jumping mechanism is equally fiddly and unfair; if you fail to leap those gaps with pixel-perfect precision, you fall short and it's goodnight Vienna... "oh nooo", weeee... splat, insert sense-of-foreboding-ditty here... lather, rinse, repeat. Is it really any wonder Amiga Power gave the game away free on a cover disk back in 1991? Personally I would have buried all surplus copies right next to Atari's 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial' in that New Mexico landfill site, concreted over the surface and arranged for the contaminated area to be patrolled around the clock for all of eternity by an elite team of mercenaries accompanied by rabid guard dogs.



Just imagine if Millennium had failed to learn their lesson, releasing an equally abominable sequel, sans gloves (or *Kid* himself for that matter) while retaining the eponymous title. That could never happen, surely? They wouldn't dare!

